

The Times-Dispatch

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WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 7, 1912.

A LEGISLATIVE OUTRAGE.

Blind to their oath to uphold the Constitution of Virginia, a majority of the Senate will to-day, in all probability, re-submit to popular vote the amendment permitting city treasurers and city commissioners of the revenue unlimited tenure. Even a cornfield lawyer knows that such re-submission this year is unconstitutional; that all law and precedent declare that the amendment is dead and that the only thing the General Assembly can do is to start all over again. If the vote comes to-day, the people of this State will behold the sorry spectacle of Senators who know that the bill is unconstitutional voting for it. It is true that certain members of the body are convinced beyond doubt that the measure is contrary to law, but because of the appeals of officeholders at home, will, against their conscience and against their better judgment, uphold a proposition which contravenes the Constitution. Lawyers, good lawyers, men of reputation and standing at the bar, men who know the Constitution and know constitutional law, will lay aside their obligation to support the fundamental law. The Constitutional Convention, a body composed of some of the best lawyers and thinkers and patriots of Virginia, with care and deliberation, after long debate, inserted in the Constitution a provision limiting city treasurers to two terms and city commissioners of the revenue to one term when elected by the people. It was the judgment of the convention that the principles here sought to be put into operation were in full accord with human experience and the public weal, yet by their selfish machinations the city treasurers and commissioners have prevented these reforms from having any trial whatever. City treasurers and commissioners in office when the Constitution went into effect are yet in office in many cases. They were voted out of office by the people at the polls in 1910, but in order to save their political necks and to keep from being ousted at all, certain treasurers and commissioners employed an able lawyer, who devised an ingenious plan for reconsidering the matter in the General Assembly and re-submitting the question to popular vote this year. If this amendment had been ratified instead of rejected by the people, no question of constitutionality would have been raised. The cry of unconstitutionality in this year has been the work of a special class. The principle laid down in the Constitution has never been given a trial, and a desperate band of officeholders has so far defeated utterly this wise law. A Constitutional Convention proposes, but the city treasurers and commissioners dispose.

Supporters of re-submission this year shout, "The people desire it, the people desire it!" There has been no evidence that the people do any such thing. More than one hundred newspapers representing the counties of Virginia and open to expressions from the people are constantly scanned by the Times-Dispatch, but no expression of demand for this re-submission has to our knowledge ever appeared in any county or city newspaper in the Commonwealth. It is possible that a few newspapers have editorially advocated such re-submission, but if so, they have not been noted. The truth of it is, the people, as a whole, know nothing at all of the proposition. Any statement that the people desire this amendment is a platitudinous falsehood. The city treasurers and commissioners of the revenue—there are all that wish re-submission this year and in so asking they stand for a principle when the Constitutional Convention and the public-spirited men of Virginia considered wholly unwelcome and detrimental to the interests of the people.

It is an unwholesome state of affairs that will let a few office-owning individuals oppose successfully the welfare of the Virginia people. An unconstitutional amendment to the Constitution of Virginia has passed the House with but one dissenting vote, and only one man in the Senate so far has dared to raise his voice against this pernicious movement. Legislators do not ask themselves, "Is it to the people's best interest?" but "Is it to my best interest?" The law-maker says to himself, "If I vote for this, I will have the city treasurers and commissioners' support in my next race for re-election or some other office. I cannot afford to antagonize them. This is unconstitutional, but—" He does not inquire of himself, "Will this amendment benefit the people? Is the principle laid down by the Constitutional Convention better and more in accord with good and honest government?" It is strange that those who will not let themselves think about this matter are so sure of retaining their political power. It would be hard to think of a better issue to oppose a man with than the

fact that he voted for unconstitutional re-submission; the simple platform that a legislator who voted for an unconstitutional measure when he knew it was unconstitutional is not fit to represent the people, would be powerful in its force in a legislative campaign.

Is that conscientious and patriotic opponent of this amendment, Senator Walker, to stand alone against it? Is it possible that experienced legislators and reputable lawyers can deafen themselves to law and precedent, duty and public obligation? It is said that an overwhelming majority of the Senate committed themselves to this amendment before inquiring into its constitutionality. Can it be possible that Senators will hold a private pledge made in the dark parlament to public duty?

STICK TO THE TRAIL.

In spite of the fierce howl lined up against the Byrd Tax Commission bill as originally offered, the Times-Dispatch still hopes that the Legislature will make real progress towards the abolition of the present inequalities of the taxation in this State. It is a noteworthy fact that the arguments advanced against the Byrd bill have all been addressed to the method it offered, for nobody has been able to deny the facts upon which the cry for tax reform is based.

Since these facts are undeniable, since those who honestly objected to the Byrd bill have found themselves compelled to offer some substitute for these remedies, the question narrows down to the single issue—what remedies will Virginia use in the present situation?

An analysis of the effect of Mr. White's segregation bill would mean laborious and complicated calculations; to adopt the bill without analysis might prove a catastrophe for the State. Taxes are the life blood of government. When tax laws are honest and wise, industry invariably prospers; but even Rome, with its riches, with all the world at its feet, with Asia and Africa for granaries, and the forests and mines of barbarous Europe for its storehouses, could not survive its unwise and unjust tax laws, and the fall of Rome was primarily due to a bad financial system.

That Virginia has survived and prospered under its present tax laws is a proof rather of the vitality of its people than of the justice of its legislation. These facts are understood by the whole Legislature. No matter what private interest this or that member or section may desire to serve in maintaining the present statutes, all admit that the laws are unfair and both can and should be remedied. Why, then, should Virginia wait two or four years more to undertake this pressing and obvious reform? Why should we give other States the advantage of attracting capital and labor by reason of their better conception of the principles and practices of taxation? Why should we penalize the whole State, and lay a burden on the prosperity of all its citizens in order to perpetuate the private advantage of one locality? There can be no answer to this except that the power of the few obstructionists is greater than the capacity of all the adherents to the cause of improved laws.

It would be a profound setback to Virginia if, with all that lies before it, the Legislature allows itself to be drawn off on some cross trail and loses the opportunity to begin a systematic and intelligent reform of our tax system. And in making this improvement the Legislature cannot adopt any untried experiment; the figures and conclusions of the Tax Commission are before it. These figures furnish a ground upon which the Legislature can base its conclusions, and these figures—not the visionary dreamings of untitled experimentalists—are the guides the Legislature should adopt.

AVIATION VALUE IN WAR DEMONSTRATION.

An interesting demonstration of the practical importance and value of the aeroplane in war was made two or three days ago by Captain Montu and Lieutenant Rossi, two aviators attached to the Italian army in Tripoli. These officers succeeded in locating an Arabian encampment about which nothing was known, except that it existed somewhere. More than that, they ascertained the strength of the enemy and his equipment, information the Italian command could not have otherwise acquired save through a reconnaissance in force, which would have been both hazardous and undesirable.

Yet, in this instance, the Arabs did not fly into a panic at sight of the "queen machine." On the contrary, they let it at it a storm of bullets, with the result of wounding slightly Captain Montu who fortunately happened not to be steering, and putting four holes through the wings of the craft. This was due, however, to the fact that some trouble with the motor and a strong and sudden gust of wind caused "the eagle to swoop too near its prey."

On the strength of the demonstration, it is claimed, and with obvious force, that had the Italians in the beginning of the war had a competent corps of birdmen scouts, they would have been this made vastly more progress in the matter of penetrating and pacifying the hinterland. The lack of just such knowledge as the Montu-Rossi scout revealed is responsible mainly for the blunders and reverses of and inability to press vigorously and confidently the interior campaign.

THE VALUE OF GAME TO THE FARMER.

Leaving out of consideration the enormous value of bird life to the farmer as an agency of insect destruction, those species known as game birds are themselves the source of great

income when protected. This fact cannot be doubted if the conditions in North Carolina and other Southern States be investigated. Thousands upon thousands of acres of farming land have been preserved by city and non-resident sportsmen, who, in order to hunt, are forced to pay the farmers for shooting privileges. Under the general plan, the sportsman usually leases the farmer's hunting rights, the consideration being the payment by the farmer of the latter's land taxes, the farmer becoming the game warden of his own land. The land taxes frequently amount to as much as 10 cents an acre in the more highly cultivated districts.

The farmers of North Carolina very generally favor this system, for it relieves them not only of a considerable tax, but of the nuisance of large numbers of village and city people tramping through their woods, fields and pastures, a source of much annoyance in the country. A section in which land is taken up in this way by sportsmen soon becomes dotted with shooting lodges, for the upkeep of which much local labor is employed and large sums of money expended in the neighborhood. Instead, therefore, of adequate game protection, as proposed in the Rutherford-Moncrief bill, working a hardship upon the farmer, it actually creates a resource of a real market value, in addition to the economic value of the feathered farm hands, which ceaselessly work for the welfare of the crops. The farmer soon learns to regard his shooting rights as a thing of value, just as he does his water rights, his standing timber, his ice pond, his fishing rights, his surplus manure, etc., etc.

In the event he desires to hunt off his own land, he willingly pays \$1 for a county license, for it is that very license which indirectly makes his own farm more valuable and perhaps pays his taxes. Then, too, the license system breaks up a large class of country idlers, who do nothing for several months in the year but scour the fields and woods when hunting is free to all. In the South it forces hundreds of negroes to work on the farms for a living, who otherwise cast aside legitimate labor and earn a precarious livelihood as pot-hunters.

Any one who has ever visited the country districts of Virginia in November with recall how the roads and woods and fields are thickly peopled with so-called hunters, nine-tenths of whom are trespassers, without the slightest respect for property of any kind. It is impossible to estimate the loss in cattle and in forests due to the carelessness of this class, for to them hundreds of fires are annually due.

Again, a passenger on any one of our railway lines during the hunting season sees hundreds of city folks, men and boys, who, with our dog and gun, devastate the country districts. This class pays absolutely nothing for the privilege, and deprives the farmer of what is really his property. Why should these people be permitted to hunt without contributing something for the privilege? There are but six States in the Union where they can do it. Hunting is not an inalienable right any more than is oystering or the ownership of water power. The savages so considered it, but even they were restricted to certain areas soon after civilization took charge of the country.

The effect of the proposed law would be, in Virginia as elsewhere, that the rural landowner and all who lived on the land would still hunt thereon without paying for the privilege, but that the city man would either have to pay the farmer for hunting privileges or not indulge in the sport. Yet it has been said that this law would not be fair to the farmer. It is suggested that any farmer who is thus misled write to some friend in North Carolina or in Alabama and satisfy himself as to the conditions in those States.

Gaby Deslys has invented a new dance, "Deedle Dum Deed," that is said to be wholly unobtainable under the postal laws.

Richmond's youthful would-be Ty Cobbs and Christy Mathewsons are warming up now on the vacant lots.

The great Northern migration to Richmond can be accounted for only on the hypothesis that it is never cold here except in the summertime.

An ex-Richmond College professor, writing from Carthage, N. C., says that sentiment in that city is fast crystallizing for Wilson. Perhaps this will make Harmon go around muttering every day, "Carthage delenda est."

The aeroplane could be put to excellent use by our Solons. Such a method of transportation would land them safely at the windows of the Capitol and not force them to run the gauntlet of the besieging suffragists.

Old-fashioned women should be careful about going to the Capitol. They are so rare there that they are likely to be put in glass cases in the museum as rare specimens of the genus of no-voteforwomen.

Brother Addison, of the Lynchburg News, was gunshooting around in the Senate gallery this week. He knew full well that he dared not face the friends of Dr. and Vice-President Anna Blount Young, of the Chicago Equal Suffrage Association, massed on the first floor, seeking whom they might convert.

The "turkey trot" may be bad, but the good old dance that used to go to the tune of "Turkey in the Straw" was the best ever invented.

Every day in Richmond is so much like Christmas that a lot of people have forgotten to take down the holly decorations.

On the Spur of the Moment

By Roy K. Moulton

Spring. (A man in Indiana claims to have seen the first robin on the ground. The first new robin has been seen, and so it's up to us. To tune our lyre for maybe May and make a little fuss about the advent, once again, of most salubrious Spring. Along about this time of year it is the proper thing.

Oh, glorious Spring with chirping birds and sprouting grass and grass. It's time to get the rake and hoe and start the garden mass. Mr. Moulton, Spring is almost time for wild flowers to be time—Excuse us for a minute while we thaw a frozen pipe.

Oh, wondrous Spring, we welcome thee once more with open arms. We welcome thee, with our midst with all the varied charms. We greet thee, charming season, with a loud and joyful shout—We've got to get down cellar now, our furnace fire is out.

Oh, balmy Spring, we will ere long get up each morn at dawn. To get the neighbor's mower out and make a little fuss about the lawn. We're glad to see you once again. That's certain, but—Gee whizz! We've got to stop this verse right here, our doggone ink has dried.

Caught on the Fly.

An Eastern paper asks if poets make good husbands. Most of them make better husbands than they do poets. Mr. Beljowsky's comet chose a poor time to visit the earth. There are too many counter attractions just now.

It would take a pretty lively moving picture machine to catch all the details of that Chinese revolution. The Whitlock Brand seems to be the brand that Toledo likes.

A Connecticut minister has started a crusade against the state lottery at weddings. Nothing, however, has been said about national and rolling pin throwing after weddings.

Dr. Pearson, the philanthropist, has decided to quit tobacco after using it for seventy years. It is always wise to stop smoking like that before it becomes a habit.

Eddie Young, a California pugilist, has gone into the ministry. He will be a shrinkage in the state receipts. It seems as though the league peace conference should do a little conferring just about now.

Buffalo Bill has said farewell to the show business forever until next season.

According to Uncle Abner.

There is hardly a gal that objects to havin' a mustache on her upper lip procein' it's the right feller's mustache.

One of Old Bluk's daughters married the advance agent for a show and the feller his other daughter got married didn't have much money either.

It is getting so the musical comedies that sing and advertise champagne or cigarettes in advertisement come break-fast food or other.

Doc Hooks, the only practitioner in this locality, is thinking of movin' to a new field, and Undertaker Amos Butts is also thinkin' of some movin' to some town, although he don't know exactly where he is thinkin' of movin' to. He says the town that's good enough for Doc is good enough for him.

Any feller that will leave the gold band on his seggar while he smokes it is the same kind of a feller that will borrow a dress suit and wear it to a funeral.

Nobody knows just how a married couple can get on in a peaceful way, well as do a man and woman who have been married—about two weeks.

Doc Hooks is a good feller and everybody knows it, except his wife. The feller that invented the red rubber cherry for the saloon cocktail was a gentling when he got a thing on the feller that invented the rubber oyster for the church social.

Some Seasonable Hints.

When suffering from a cold, heat do not drink too much ice water. If you do not perspire freely this is a sign that there is something wrong with your system and you should see a doctor at once.

Don't exercise too much in the hot sun. It is a sunstroke. It is the same as though he is struck. He is never the same afterwards.

Don't forget to put sunbonnets on the horses to protect them from the fierce heat of the sun.

A very suitable thing in the way of a gift for the one who has been made out of discarded mosquito netting or out of old hammock.

QUERIES & ANSWERS

Senator Featherston.

Will you tell me the height and weight of Senator Featherston, of Lynchburg? G. H. L.

Six feet six inches, 125 pounds.

Panama Exposition.

When will the exposition at San Francisco open? Will it celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal? "On or about January 1, 1915." That and the four hundredth anniversary of the "discovery" of the Pacific.

Carnegie and Colleges.

Why is the name "Laird of Skibo" applied to Mr. Carnegie? What does "Laird" mean? What "Skibo"? Is there any reputable college in the United States in which the degrees of A. B. and B. L. may both be taken in five years? S. S. C. B. L.

Because he is "Laird of Skibo," Laird is old Scotch for "lord," and the title might be applied with propriety even to the Duke of Argyle, while it is much more likely to be given to the smaller proprietors of lands, "Skibo" is the name of a Scotch estate of Mr. Carnegie's.

There is scarcely a "reputable" college in this country in which a well-proven student may not take these two degrees in five years, provided, of course, the college confers these particular degrees.

Abe Martin

I said in all seriousness it was a matter of principle with many of the Richmond alumni to reject new ideas. Lately I have read many letters in your columns opposing equal suffrage for women. I have been long ago told in many cases the only argument of the writer was that such things are now, to him or her unheard of, and accordingly monstrous, and the said thing about it is that many of the weakest, flimsiest views are voiced by the men of college education. I have thought on their merits is never anything but an advantage. It is another class of people that present the real difficulty. It is the gentlemen who speak with the authority derived from precious service in the past, and raise their voices to forbid any change in the present. It is they that we of the present generation find hard to answer. It is the ladies who were born in the olden times, who were trained for quite other duties than those our sisters and wives face, the ladies who have been told by this romantic novel-type of womanhood was perfect, and who actually and honestly believe the ideal pattern has been long ago set. They are the seriously difficult opponents of the work of the present generation in Virginia. It comes down to that in generation has its work to do. Our great-grandfathers founded the Republic, our fathers fought through the war and rebuilt the State, and our task is a different one. Our great work is to teach the people of

THE INEVITABLE TOPIC AT ALL GATHERINGS.

By John T. McCutcheon.

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"Well, young man, what's the news today? What has Teddy been doing?"



"The man lacks balance! He's always going off half-cocked. It's disgusting the way he is running around the country talking to every Tom, Dick and Harry! Who wants to hear him! Not I, for one."



"He's too immoderate! If anybody differs with him he gets like a wild man!"

Voice of the People

Against Atlantic Argument.

To the Editor of The Times-Dispatch:

Sir—I am informed that, on Thursday, the 25th, in the Virginia Legislature, during the hearing by the Senate Committee on Public Institutions and Education, a telegram from South Carolina was read which opposed the bill for the co-ordinate college for women in the name of the University of Virginia alumni of South Carolina. There is no general organization of University of Virginia alumni in this State, and the question of the woman's college has never been discussed by the chapters acting together. Accordingly, by telegram purporting to give the unanimous view of the South Carolina alumni represents merely the opinions of the senders and no more. So much for the sake of the facts, which ought to be known in justice to those of the South Carolina alumni who were totally misrepresented without ever being consulted.

So much has been said on the other side, so many passionate protests have been directed against the proposed co-ordinate college for women, that I can not help raising my voice for it as an alumnus of the University of Virginia, as a teacher by profession, and as a Virginian.

First of all, however, let me say I do not identify the Early-Rison bill with the cause of higher education for women. Henry Taylor, who has shown in his letter to Mr. Armstrong Gordon some of the flaws in the bill, is perfectly right. The bill should be worded in explicit terms to forestall any such objection. But that is not the root of the matter with me. The question of the woman's college has been discussed by the alumni of the University of Virginia, and the question of the woman's college has never been discussed by the chapters acting together. Accordingly, by telegram purporting to give the unanimous view of the South Carolina alumni represents merely the opinions of the senders and no more. So much for the sake of the facts, which ought to be known in justice to those of the South Carolina alumni who were totally misrepresented without ever being consulted.

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"Now, mind you, he's done lots of things that I admire. For instance, his refusal to accept a third term was a splendid thing. He has tremendous energy; I give him due credit for that, BUT—"



"The man lacks balance! He's always going off half-cocked. It's disgusting the way he is running around the country talking to every Tom, Dick and Harry! Who wants to hear him! Not I, for one."



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